

VZCZCXRO1653
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHAE #0951 3480603
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 140603Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9335
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1553
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1731
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T ASMARA 000951

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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: GSE FEARS OF INSURGENT ACTIVITY IN NORTHERN ERITREA

Classified By: AMB Ronald K. McMullen, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) An Eritrean employee of a mining company recently traveled on business to Zara, located approximately 120 kilometers north of Keren. Provided by the Eritrean military with an armed convoy, the employee reported a tense and nerve-wracking journey due to the fear of insurgent attacks. The traveler noted that the convoy did not travel after four o'clock in the afternoon. The traveler was quite scared and reported that the extent of the military's tension concerning potential attacks was a revelation.

12. (C) The traveler stated that Eritreans generally refer to insurgents in this area as the &Fifth Column, a likely misnomer, as the group is reported to be a domestic anti-GSE insurgent organization, possibly an offshoot of the pre-independence Eritrean Liberation Front. They reportedly operate in northern Eritrea (allegedly in the past with the support of Sudan), using guerilla tactics, with small groups of two or three individuals attacking vehicles traveling through the region. In contrast, the GSE officially describes insurgents in Eritrea's northern region as fanatic fundamentalists engaged in jihad and not affiliated with the ELF. While information on the security situation in the North remains murky, the Eritrean military clearly finds the threat of insurgents serious enough to provide armed escort to the region for travelers of particular GSE interest.
MCMULLEN